

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 08377 021531Z

45

ACTION SCCT-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 SY-05 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /068 W

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O 021430Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5080

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY IMMEDIATE

SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

JCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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E. O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS

SUBJECT: REPORTED ABDUCTION OF COLONEL ERNEST R. MORGAN

REF: USDAO BEIRUT 405, JULY 1975

1. LOCAL AP REP HAS TOLD EMBASSY THAT HIS OPPOSITE NUMBER IN ANKARA HAS QUOTED AMERICAN OFFICIALS IN ANKARA TO THE EFFECT THAT COL MORGAN HAS BEEN MISSING SINCE JUNE 30TH AND WAS LAST KNOWN TO BE IN BEIRUT. AP HAS ASKED FOR CONFIRMATION FOREGOING AND WE EXPECT OTHER AGENCIES TO FOLLOW SUIT AS STORY GETS KNOWN. UNLESS INSTRUCTED OTHERWISE EMBASSY WILL ISSUE AT 10 A.M. TOMORROW, JULY 3. FOLLOWING STATEMENT.

2. QUOTE. COL. ERNEST R. MORGAN, ASSIGNED TO THE HQS OF THE JOINT U.S. MILITARY MISSION FOR AID TO TURKEY, DISAPPEARED IN BEIRUT ON JUNE 29, WHILE TRANSITING THE CITY ON THE WAY BACK TO ANKARA FROM PAKISTAN, WHERE HE HAD BEEN ATTENDING THE CENTO
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EXERCISES. COL. MORGAN ARRIVED IN BEIRUT FROM

PAKISTAN ON PA 001 THE MORNING OF JUNE 29 AND WAS SCHEDULED TO DEPART FOR ANKARA ON THE SAME FLIGHT THE MORNING OF JUNE 30. PAN AMERICAN HAD MADE ARRANGEMENTS FOR HIM TO OVERNIGHT AT THE NEW MELKART HOTEL. ABOUT 6 P.M. ON THE 29TH, COL. MORGAN ENGAGED A TAXI TO TAKE HIM BACK TO THE AIRPORT. ACCORDING TO THE TAXI DRIVER, COL. MORGAN HAD HIM WAIT OUTSIDE THE AIRPORT WHILE HE BOUGHT SOME READING MATTER. ON THE RETURN DRIVE TO THE CITY, THE TAXI WAS STOPPED BY ABOUT 20 ARMED MEN AT THE AIRPORT CIRCLE. COL MORGAN WAS TAKEN AWAY AND THE TAXI DRIVER RELEASED. THE EMBASSY LEARNED OF COL MORGAN'S DISAPPEARANCE JUNE 30. SINCE THEN, IT HAS BEEN WORKING CLOSELY WITH APPROPRIATE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES TO LOCATE HIM AND EFFECT HIS RELEASE. COL. MORGAN IS 43 YEARS OLD. HIS PERMANENT RESIDENCE IS IN PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA, AND HIS FAMILY IS AT HIS POST OF ASSIGNMENT IN ANKARA. END

3. OUR PRINCIPAL CONCERN IS OBVIOUSLY COL. MORGAN'S SAFETY. WE HAVE CONSIDERED FOREGOING EXCLUSIVELY FROM THAT POINT OF VIEW AND BELIEVE IT MAY HELP TO HAVE THIS STORY PICKED UP IN LOCAL PRESS. AT LEAST WE DO NOT SEE THAT IT CAN DO ANY HARM. GODLEY

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